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**NEWS From:**

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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**FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA**

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For Immediate Release:  
October 4, 2001

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## **Honda, Shays to Unveil Bipartisan Measure Opposing Violence Against Sikh Americans**

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Congressmen Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Mike Honda (D-CA) today joined with Dr. Pritpal Singh, Coordinator of the American Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which consists of over 50 Sikh Religious Centers throughout the country, and other leaders from the Sikh American Community to unveil a resolution condemning bigotry and violence against Sikh Americans in the wake of the terrorist attacks on New York City and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. One hundred and nine Republican and Democratic Members of Congress have signed onto the resolution to be introduced today in the U.S. House of Representatives.

**"I am hopeful, that with the voice of Congress, we can inform all those who would target their fellow Americans simply because of their appearance or faith, that acts of hatred and brutality will never stand and will not be tolerated,"** said Honda. **"In responding to this crisis, it is essential that all of us work together to promote tolerance and understanding in our own communities and learn from our history by making sure that no ethnic or religious group is singled out based upon fear or prejudice ever again."**

**"Injustice anywhere flies in the face of justice everywhere,"** Shays said. **"Today we unite not as Republicans and Democrats but as Americans against intolerance, bigotry and discrimination toward Sikh Americans."**

**"Sikh Americans strongly condemn the senseless violence and aggression that has taken so many lives and shaken so many more,"** said Dr. Singh. **"At a time when Sikh Americans most need to support those affected by the tragedy, they are burdened themselves with serious concern for their own safety, and the safety of their children. We stand firmly behind our President and our Congress in their efforts to seek justice and rebuild and are very grateful to Congressmen Honda and Shays for speaking out on this important issue which affects all Americans."**

Sikh Americans are easily recognizable by their turbans and beards – both required articles of their faith. There are approximately 500,000 Sikh Americans in the U.S or roughly 1/6 of 1% of the entire U.S. population. Despite their small numbers, Sikhs have suffered from violence and other hate crimes more than any other single segment of the U.S. population. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, more than two hundred innocent Sikh American men, women and children have been attacked.

**More...**

## **Honda/Tolerance for Sikhs/News Release/Pg. 2**

On September 15, Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh American in Mesa, Arizona, became the first American to die as a result of racial backlash when he was shot to death in front of his business. Many other Sikh Americans have remained within their homes during the last three weeks due to threats of violence and fear for the safety of their children during the school day.

Mr. Honda, a Japanese American who was sent to an internment camp in Amache Colorado with his family in the wake of Pearl Harbor, continues to be a voice for racial and religious tolerance in the United States Congress. Since the first Sunday after the terrorist attacks, Honda has convened regular meetings with an "Interfaith Working Group" comprised of religious and community leaders of diverse faiths and backgrounds in San Jose to pursue strategies to bring different communities together to prevent hatred and violence in the South Bay. Honda, a former high school teacher and principal, has also visited many local schools, community centers and places of worship to discuss issues of tolerance with his constituents. Honda also sits on the Aviation Subcommittee in the U.S. House and is working with the FAA and FBI to improve aviation security through innovative technology.

**Satellite Coordinates for This Event:** Telstar 6, Transponder 15, Downlink 4000 C-Band, Standard Audio 1 pm EST, 10 am PST

**Link to Webcast for this event:** <http://www.lcomm.com/LComm.html>